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SUBJECT: NUCLEAR FUEL BANKS - BRAZIL THINKS THE IDEA IS PREMATURE
FOR DECISION, BUT MOST LIKELY WILL ABSTAIN

REF: A) STATE 120282, B) STATE 117710, C) BRASILIA 1141

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11. (SBU) On November 25, Science Counselor discussed the proposal for establishing a nuclear fuel bank (per REFTELS B and C) with the Director of Brazil's Ministry of External Relations' (MRE) Department of Disarmament and Sensitive Technologies, Minister Santiago Mourao. As indicated in REFTEL C, the Government of Brazil (GOB) has interest in discussing the proposal for a nuclear fuel bank at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), but at this time Brazil still has various questions it would like to see clarified.

13. (SBU) Mourao said that it was "premature" for the IAEA to be taking a decision on the Russian proposal at the upcoming Board of Governors (BOG) meeting. He said that the Brazilian Ambassador in Vienna had raised their concerns during the recent meeting in Vienna on the proposal. Brazil was particularly interested in knowing how would a nuclear fuel bank work, when and under what circumstances could a country obtain access, and what were the criteria for a country to participate in the program.

14. (SBU) A small working group, including Brazil and also some countries that are likely participants in such a program (for example, Malaysia), should be set up to look more in depth at the question, suggested Mourao. He added that their Ambassador in Vienna had been "unleashed" and so had ample authority to handle this issue from Vienna.

15. (SBU) COMMENT. If a vote comes up at this IAEA BOG, Brazil would most likely not vote in favor. Mourao was unclear about whether they would abstain or vote against. However, the MRE generally does not like to break consensus or be seen as the country blocking a decision, unless the question is of vital interest. Post believes that if the majority of member states at the IAEA BOG are in favor of the proposal, then Brazil will most likely abstain. END COMMENT.

JACKSON